

## **CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:

- 1    1.    A method comprising:  
2        receiving authentication information associated with an authentication policy from a  
3        remote device;  
4        comparing the received authentication information against authentication information  
5        associated with an authentication policy in a local device; and  
6        determining an authentication priority between the local device and the remote device  
7        based, at least in part, on the comparison of the authentication information.
- 1    2.    A method according to claim 1, wherein the authentication information includes an  
2        indication of priority level associated with the device.
- 1    3.    A method according to claim 2, wherein authentication policy exhibiting a higher priority  
2        level will control which device initiates authentication between the local device and the remote  
3        device.
- 1    4.    A method according to claim 3, wherein the authentication information further includes  
2        an indication of device class, wherein a tie in priority level between the devices is resolved  
3        through analysis of the indication of device class associated with the local device and the remote  
4        device.

1 5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the indication of device class denotes whether  
2 the device is one of a base station, a subscriber station, and/or a client station.

1 6. A method according to claim 5, wherein a base station has a higher device class than a  
2 subscriber station.

1 7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
2 selecting one of the remote device or the local device to initiate authentication based, at  
3 least in part, on the determined authentication priority.

1 8. A method according to claim 7, further comprising:  
2 initiating an authentication process by the selected one of the remote device or the local  
3 device.

1 9. A storage medium comprising content which, when accessed by an electronic appliance,  
2 causes the electronic appliance to perform the method according to claim 1.

1 10. An apparatus comprising:  
2 a transmitter, to selectively communicate with a remote device; and  
3 a security agent, associated with a local device and coupled with the transmitter, to  
4 receive authentication information associated with an authentication policy from a remote  
5 device, and to compare the received authentication information against authentication  
6 information associated with an authentication policy in a local device to identify a relative

7 authentication priority between the local device and the remote device based, at least in part, on  
8 the comparison of the authentication information.

1 11. An apparatus according to claim 10, the apparatus further comprising:  
2 memory, responsive to the security agent, to receive and maintain an authentication  
3 policy associated with a device.

1 12. An apparatus according to claim 11, the authentication policy comprising authorization  
2 information including an indication of authentication priority level associated with the device.

1 13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the authentication policy exhibiting a higher  
2 priority level will control which device initiates authentication between the local device and the  
3 remote device.

1 14. An apparatus according to claim 13, the memory further comprising an indication of  
2 device class within the authentication policy, wherein a tie in priority level between the devices  
3 is resolved by the security agent through comparison of the indication of device class associated  
4 with the local device and the remote device.

1 15. An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the indication of device class denotes  
2 whether the device is one of a base station, a subscriber station, and/or a client station.

1 16. An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein a base station has a higher device class than  
2 a subscriber station.

1 17. An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the transceiver selectively establishes a  
2 communication channel with the remote device through which the transceiver receives at least a  
3 subset of the authentication policy associated with the remote device.

1 18. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the transceiver is a wireless transceiver, and  
2 wherein the communication channel is a wireless communication channel in accordance with a  
3 wireless metropolitan area network (WMAN) communication standard.

1 19. An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the security agent selects one of the remote  
2 device or the local device to initiate authentication based, at least in part, on the determined  
3 authentication priority.

1 20. An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the security agent initiates an authentication  
2 process by the selected one of the remote device or the local device.

1 21. A system comprising:  
2 one or more dipole antenna(e);  
3 a transmitter, responsive to the one or more dipole antenna(e), to selectively  
4 communicate with a remote device; and

5 a security agent, associated with a local device and coupled with the transmitter, to  
6 receive authentication information associated with an authentication policy from a remote  
7 device, and to compare the received authentication information against authentication  
8 information associated with an authentication policy in a local device to identify a relative  
9 authentication priority between the local device and the remote device based, at least in part, on  
10 the comparison of the authentication information.

1 22. A system according to claim 21, further comprising:

2 memory, responsive to the security agent, to receive and maintain an authentication  
3 policy associated with a device.

1 23. A system according to claim 22, the authentication policy comprising authorization  
2 information including an indication of authentication priority level associated with the device.

1 24. A system according to claim 23, wherein the authentication policy exhibiting a higher  
2 priority level will control which device initiates authentication between the local device and the  
3 remote device.

1 25. A system according to claim 24, the memory further comprising an indication of device  
2 class within the authentication policy, wherein a tie in priority level between the devices is  
3 resolved by the security agent through comparison of the indication of device class associated  
4 with the local device and the remote device.